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10/816,723	04/02/2004	Jonathan Dale	073338.0179	1014
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

ptomail1@bakerbotts.com
glenda.orrantia@bakerbotts.com

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/816,723	Applicant(s) DALE ET AL.	
	Examiner Mohamed H. Ali	Art Unit 3693	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 April 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 20 April 2004 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

2. **Claims-1-20** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by **Dodson et al** (US 2005/0222944 A1).

As per claim 1, *Dodson et al* discloses a method for processing an expense report (see Abstract), comprising:

receiving at an expense report agent (See para 0022 and **Fig.1**, via expense report management module **16**) one or more transaction identifiers (**Fig.1 # 58**) associated with an expense report (**Fig.1 # 44**), a transaction identifier corresponding to a transaction of one or more transactions, the expense report requesting reimbursement for the one or more transactions (see para 0035, line 5; via expense reports **44** submitted for review);

automatically requesting transaction information corresponding to the one or

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more transaction identifiers from one or more retailer systems (see para 0045; via step **104**, card processing module **12** automatically identifies from the transaction details **34** using corporate credit card **32a** and non-corporate card **32b**);

receiving the transaction information from the one or more retailer systems, the transaction information provided in a machine-readable format (see 0033 and **Fig.1**; via image management module **18** may read the computer-readable identifier **58** with expense report **44**);

inserting the transaction information into the expense report to request the reimbursement for the one or more transactions (see 0015, lines 5-19; via employee select transactions to be automatically populated into an expense report and to submit for review and reimbursement); and

evaluating the expense report at the expense report agent to determine the reimbursement (see para 0035, via expense report management module **16** provides interface for expense managers to access and review expense report **44** to make various determinations regarding approval for reimbursement).

As per claim 2, Dodson discloses further step of performing at least one of the following in response to the evaluation:

initiating the reimbursement for the one or more transactions (see para 0016, lines 15-20 and para 0035, lines 11-15; via the expense manager review expense report **44** for various determinations);

denying the reimbursement for the one or more transactions (para 0035, line 15; via reject the expense report **44**); and

returning the expense report to a user system associated with the expense report (para 0035, lines 15-20; via request additional information from the employee).

As per claim 3, *Dodson* discloses the steps of evaluating the expense report at the expense report agent to determine the reimbursement further comprises:

accessing an expense policy governing the expense report (para 037; via accounting rules **70** including policy of the organization, standard; and

evaluating the expense report in accordance with the expense policy (para 0037, via accounting module **22** may apply a set of accounting rules **70** to the expense list in an expense report **44** related to the amount of particular type of expense valid for reimbursement).

As per claim 5, *Dodson* discloses the step of evaluating the expense report at the expense report agent to determine the reimbursement further comprises:

identifying a non-conforming line item of a plurality of line items of the expense report (see para 0035, line 11-18; via expense manager review and make various determinations regarding particular expense items, request a receipt **62** for one or more particular expenses listed on the expense report **44**, inherently verifying conforming or non-conforming line items with report **44**);

retrieving a chain of command corresponding to the non-conforming line item, the chain of command comprising a sequence of authorities (see para 0035, lines 1-5; via Management Module **20** cooperate with module **16** to provide an interface for one or more expense managers such as employee's manager or supervisor according to authority sequence); and

performing the following for at least one authority of the sequence of authorities until the non-conforming line item is resolved;

selecting an authority of the sequence of authorities as a current authority (see para 0035, lines 6-11; via Management module **20** provides expense manager interface to view expense report **44**);

sending the expense report to an authority expense report agent corresponding to the current authority;

determining if the non-conforming line item has been resolved; and

selecting a next authority of the sequence of authorities as the current authority if the non-conforming line item has not been resolved.

As per claim 6, Dodson discloses the step of comprising resolving the non-conforming line item by performing at least one of the following:

determining that the non-conforming line item has been approved by an authority that can approve the non-conforming line item (see para 0035, lines 1-19; via Management module **20** and the expense manager determines expense items listed on the expense report **44** for approval);

determining that the non-conforming line item has been corrected by an authority that can correct the non-conforming line item; and

determining that the non-conforming line item has been rejected.

As per claim 7, Dodson discloses an expense report agent for processing an expense report (0022-0023), comprising:

an interface operable to receive one or more transaction identifiers associated

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with an expense report, a transaction identifier corresponding to a transaction of one or more transactions, the expense report requesting reimbursement for the one or more transactions (see para 0040, lines 10-14; via interfaces between modules 12-22 and/or with external entities); and

a processing engine (para 0022, via computers with processors and devices) coupled to the interface and operable to:

automatically request transaction information corresponding to the one or more transaction identifiers from one or more retailer systems (see para 0045; via step **104**, card processing module **12** automatically identifies from the transaction details **34** using corporate credit card **32a** and non-corporate card **32b**);

receive the transaction information from the one or more retailer systems, the transaction information provided in a machine-readable format (see 0033 and **Fig.1**; via image management module **18** may read the computer-readable identifier **58** with expense report **44**);

insert the transaction information into the expense report to request the reimbursement for the one or more transactions(see 0015, lines 5-19; via employee select transactions to be automatically populated into an expense report and to submit for review and reimbursement); and

evaluate the expense report to determine the reimbursement (see para 0035, via expense report management module **16** provides interface for expense managers to access and review expense report **44** to make various determinations regarding approval for reimbursement).

Claim 8 is rejected as per the reasons set forth in **claim 2**

Claim 9 is rejected as per the reasons set forth in **claim 3**

Claim 11 is rejected as per the reasons set forth in **claim 5**

As per claim 13, *Dodson* discloses Logic for processing an expense report, the logic embodied in a medium and operable (see para 0039, Modules 12-22 in system 10 include software and /or hardware operable to provide the functionality and inherent programmable logic)) to:

receive at an expense report agent (see para 0022 and **Fig.1**, via expense report management module **16**) one or more transaction identifiers (**Fig.1 #58**) associated with an expense report (**Fig.1 # 44**), a transaction identifier corresponding to a transaction of one or more transactions, the expense report requesting reimbursement for the one or more transactions (see para 0035, line 5; via expense reports **44** submitted for review);

automatically request transaction information corresponding to the one or more transaction identifiers from one or more retailer systems (see para 0045; via step **104**, card processing module **12** automatically identifies from the transaction details **34** using corporate credit card **32a** and non-corporate card **32b**);

receive the transaction information from the one or more retailer systems, the transaction information provided in a machine-readable format (see 0033 and **Fig.1**; via image management module **18** may read the computer-readable identifier **58** with expense report **44**);

insert the transaction information into the expense report to request the reimbursement for the one or more transactions (see 0015, lines 5-19; via employee

select transactions to be automatically populated into an expense report and to submit for review and reimbursement); and

evaluate the expense report to determine the reimbursement (see para 0035, via expense report management module **16** provides interface for expense managers to access and review expense report **44** to make various determinations regarding approval for reimbursement).

Claim 14 is rejected as per the reasons set forth in **claim 2**

Claim 15 is rejected as per the reasons set forth in **claim 3**

Claim 17 is rejected as per the reasons set forth in **claim 5**

Claim 18 is rejected as per the reasons set forth in **claim 6**

As per claim 19, Dodson discloses a system for processing an expense report, comprising:

means for receiving at an expense report agent (see para 0022 and **Fig.1**, via expense report management module **16**) one or more transaction identifiers associated with an expense report, a transaction identifier (**Fig.1 #58**) corresponding to a transaction of one or more transactions, the expense report (**Fig.1 #44**) requesting reimbursement for the one or more transactions (see para 0035, line 5; via expense reports **44** submitted for review);

means for automatically requesting transaction information corresponding to the one or more transaction identifiers from one or more retailer systems (see para 0045; via step **104**, card processing module **12** automatically identifies from the transaction details **34** using corporate credit card **32a** and non-corporate card **32b**);

means for receiving the transaction information from the one or more retailer systems, the transaction information provided in a machine-readable format (see 0033 and **Fig.1**; via image management module **18** may read the computer-readable identifier **58** with expense report **44**);

means for inserting the transaction information into the expense report to request the reimbursement for the one or more transactions (see 0015, lines 5-19; via employee select transactions to be automatically populated into an expense report and to submit for review and reimbursement); and

means for evaluating the expense report at the expense report agent to determine the reimbursement (see para 0035, via expense report management module **16** provides interface for expense managers to access and review expense report **44** to make various determinations regarding approval for reimbursement).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. **Claims 4,10,16 and 20** are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over ***Dodson et al*** (US 2005/0222944 A1) in view of ***Sommers et al*** (US 2004/0002876 A1).

As per claims 2,10 and 16, *Dodson* fails exclusively to teach the steps of determining that an expense authorization request is approved and evaluating the expense report in accordance with the expense authorization request.

However, ***Sommers*** in the same field of invention discloses the travel authorization module used to provide users to input specific travel requirement and initiation of request through approval and expense report to be routed electronically through appropriate approval levels for approval and disbursement (see para 0033-0036; via travel authorization request and approval).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention was made to include the concept of prior expense authorization approval electronically as taught by ***Sommers*** in order to facilitate the easy approval process of expense report by the approvers regardless of level (para 36)

As per claim 20, *Dodson* discloses a method for processing an expense report, comprising:

receiving at an expense report agent (see para 0022 and **Fig.1**, via expense report management module **16**) one or more transaction identifiers (**Fig.1 # 58**) associated with an expense report (**Fig.1 # 44**), a transaction identifier corresponding to a transaction of one or more transactions, the expense report requesting reimbursement for the one or more transactions (see para 0035, line 5; via expense reports **44** submitted for review);

automatically request transaction information corresponding to the one or more transaction identifiers from one or more retailer systems (see para 0045; via step **104**,

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card processing module **12** automatically identifies from the transaction details **34** using corporate credit card **32a** and non-corporate card **32b**);

receive the transaction information from the one or more retailer systems, the transaction information provided in a machine-readable format (see para 0033 and **Fig.1**; via image management module **18** may read the computer-readable identifier **58** with expense report **44**);

insert the transaction information into the expense report to request the reimbursement for the one or more transactions (see para 0015, lines 5-19; via employee select transactions to be automatically populated into an expense report and to submit for review and reimbursement); and

evaluate the expense report to determine the reimbursement (see para 0035, via expense report management module **16** provides interface for expense managers to access and review expense report **44** to make various determinations regarding approval for reimbursement), the expense report evaluated by:

accessing an expense policy governing the expense report (para 037; via accounting rules **70** including policy of the organization, standard; and

evaluating the expense report in accordance with the expense policy (para para 0037, via accounting module **22** may apply a set of accounting rules **70** to the expense list in an expense report **44** related to the amount of particular type of expense valid for reimbursement);

the expense report further evaluated by:

identifying a non-conforming line item of a plurality of line items of the expense report (see para 0035, line 11-18; via expense manager review and make various determinations regarding particular expense items, request a receipt **62** for one or more particular expenses listed on the expense report **44**, inherently verifying conforming or non-conforming line items with report **44**);

retrieving a chain of command corresponding to the non-conforming line item, the chain of command comprising a sequence of authorities (see para 0035, lines 1-5; via Management Module **20** cooperate with module **16** to provide an interface for one or more expense managers such as employee's manager or supervisor according to authority sequence); and

performing the following for at least one authority of the sequence of authorities until the non-conforming line item is resolved;

selecting an authority of the sequence of authorities as a current authority (see para 0035, lines 6-11; via Management module **20** provides expense manager interface to view expense report **44**);

sending the expense report to an authority expense report agent corresponding to the current authority;

determining if the non-conforming line item has been resolved, the non-conforming line item resolved by performing at least one of the following:

determining that the non-conforming line item has been approved by an authority that can approve the non-conforming line item (see para 0035, lines 1-19; via Management module **20** and the expense manager determines expense

items listed on the expense report **44** for approval);

determining that the non-conforming line item has been corrected by an authority that can correct the non-conforming line item; and

determining that the non-conforming line item has been rejected; and

selecting a next authority of the sequence of authorities as the current authority if the non-conforming line item has not been resolved; and

performing at least one of the following in response to the evaluation:

initiating the reimbursement for the one or more transactions (see para 0016, lines 15-20 and para 0035, lines 11-15; via the expense manager review expense report 44 for various determinations);

denying the reimbursement for the one or more transactions (para 0035, line 15; via reject the expense report **44**); and

returning the expense report to a user system associated with the expense report (para 0035, lines 15-20; via request additional information from the employee).

However, **Dodson** discloses all the elements of the invention but fails to exclusively disclose the steps of determining that an expense authorization request is approved and evaluating the expense report in accordance with the expense authorization request.

Sommers in the same field of invention discloses the travel authorization module used to provide users to input specific travel requirement and initiation of

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request through approval and expense report to be routed electronically through appropriate approval levels for approval and disbursement (see para 0033-0036; via travel authorization request and approval).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention was made to include the concept of prior expense authorization approval electronically as taught by **Sommers** in order to facilitate the easy approval process of expense report by the approvers regardless of level (para 36).

Conclusion

5. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Cheng et al (US 2003/0088487 A1) discloses Travel Expense Reimbursement system and method.

Mitchel (US 2004/0225567 A1) discloses Point-Of-Sale Receipt Generation.

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Mohamed H. Ali whose telephone number is 571-270-3021. The examiner can normally be reached on 8.00 to 6.00.

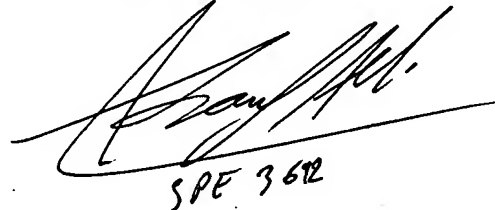
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Kambiz Abdi can be reached on 571-272-6702. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Mohamed H Ali
Examiner
Art Unit 3693

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